THE OBSERVER.

BY BEATRICE IRONSIDE.

THE FRIEND OF SOCRATES, THE FRIEND OF PLATO,
BUT ABOVE ALL, THE FRIEND OF TRUTH.

Vol. I. *Baltimore, Saturday, March* 21, 1807. *No.* 12.

BEATRICE IRONSIDE's BUDGET.

" There is a reproof that is not comely".

I was just about courting inspiration to my aid, for the purpose of supplying the Budget in my turn, when a violent philippick was handed to me, the writer of which has been much scandalized, by the indecorous deportment of some young ladies at church on Sunday last.

I perfectly coincide with the author in condemning the conduct of those, who go to the house of God for the purposes of vanity and folly. Every one in so sacred a place, should at least " assume the virtue, if they have it not ;" though piety be foreign to their hearts, decency requires a gravity of demeanor, that the devotions of others may not be interrupted.

Nothing is more charming than vivacity in youth ; nothing gives a more exhilirating glow to the benevolent heart, than the contemplation of smiles and chearfulness, which bespeak content and happiness, yet, as Solomon wisely says, " there is a time for all things." Good sense certainly dictates that we should vary our behaviour, with our situations. What can be more ridiculous than to assume a grave and solemn aspect at a party of pleasure, where the object of the meeting is to banish care and sorrow. On the other hand when the end for which we assemble is to offer divine worship, to recal and ask pardon of God, for the transgressions of ever offending humanity...to express gratitude for mercies received, and to implore those still wanting to our comfort, what, can be more absurd, than to wear the guise of sport and merriment.

True and unaffected piety, is undoubtedly the first blessing that mortals can possess. When the mind is under its heavenly influence, all vain regrets, all futile wishes vanish ; to the young and the old, the poor and the wealthy, in short to every rank and condition of life, it is alike invaluable...but alas ! how rare is its possession...its first seeds should be sown in the mind, at the earliest dawnings of reason, as soon as the heart is capable of an impression...it then would " grow with the growth and strengthen with the strength" and be the guide and the staff of support through this " vale of tears"—but unfortunately this most essential point of education, is more than all neglected.

And thus the mind either remains entirely without it, or when imagination is vivid, it becomes the prey of fanaticism, and violent and uncharitable zeal, so unlike the mild and even temperature of rational religion. The neglect of parents with regard to so sacred a duty is to be deplored; but although every one may not be so happy as to feel the fervor of piety, yet no one is ignorant, of that which decency requires when we enter the walls of a church during service. If the restraint that decorum exacts is too irksome, young people would certainly do better to refrain from going altogether, than thus to add phrophanity to impiety.

Some allowances must be made for the age of thoughtlessness, but reflection once awakened, I trust my correspondent will have occasion to complain of such levity in young ladies no more.

To E. I would say, that aware of the excellence of his intentions in writing the strictures which he addressed to me, I cannot but regret that they bear too much the stamp of passion, to answer the desired end. The world will not now be scolded into proper conduct; either the shafts of ridicule, or the blandishments of persuasion must be employed, successfully to combat the vices and follies of the day. E. too, has been partial... I must venture to pronounce, that of the reprehensible conduct which he speaks, the gentlemen are, in full proportion, equally guilty with the ladies; not seldom may we blush for both. But the silence he observes with regard to the opposite sex, neither gallantry nor impartiality justify.

For the Observer.

It is to be lamented that in the present enlightened age, when no expence nor pains are spared to give our children a liberal and scientific education, religious instruction should be so much neglected, and the youthful mind left to the influence of erroneous principles and false prejudices. I am happy, however, to find that this inattention to the moral improvement of the rising generation is by no means general. And amongst the conspicuous characters of the present age, who have interested themselves in this important concern, I with pleasure recognise the venerable Doctor Rush of Philadelphia. This scientific gentleman has in the following Essay,* demonstrated the propriety of *using the Bible as a school Book*. And I earnestly recommend it to the attentive perusal of the respectable teachers in this city, sincerely hoping that those of them who have hitherto been remiss in this point, may be induced to introduce the sacred volume into their seminaries and schools, and make their pupils acquainted with its all important contents.

SOCRATES.

* Extracted from his Essays, p. 93 and 113.

A defence of the use of the Bible as a school book. By Benjamin Rush, M. D.

" Before I state my arguments in favour of teaching children to read by means of the Bible, I shall assume the five following propositions.

I. That christianity is the only true and perfect religion, and that in proportion as mankind adopt its principles, and obey its precepts, they will be wise and happy.

II. That a better knowledge of this religion is to be acquired by reading the Bible, than in any other way.

III. That the Bible contains more knowledge necessary to man in his present state, than any other book in the world.

IV. That knowledge is most durable, and religious instruction most useful when imparted early in life.

V. That the Bible, when not read in schools, is seldom read at any subsequent period of life.

My arguments in favour of the use of the Bible as a school book are founded,

I. In the constitution of the human mind.

The memory is the first faculty which opens in the minds of children. Of how much consequence, then, must it be to impress it with the great truths of christianity, before it is pre-occupied with less interesting subjects! As all the liquors, which are poured into a cup, generally taste of that which first filled it, so all the knowledge, which is added to that which is treasured up in the memory from the Bible, generally receives an agreeable and useful tincture from it.

There is a peculiar aptitude in the minds of the children for religious knowledge. I have constantly found them in the first six or seven years of their lives, more inquisitive upon religious subjects, than upon any others: and an ingenious instructor of youth has informed me, that he has found young children more capable of receiving just ideas upon the most difficult tenets of religion, than upon the most simple branches of human knowledge. It would be strange if it were otherwise; for God creates all his means to suit all his ends. There must of course be a fitness between the human mind, and the truths which are essential to its happiness.

The influence of *prejudice** is derived from the impressions which are made upon the mind early in life; prejudices are of two kinds, true and false; and in a world where *false* prejudices do so much mischief, it would discover great weakness not to oppose them, by such as are *true*.

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* By *prejudice* is here meant, the judgment, whether true or false, which we form concerning religious and moral subjects without a previous examination or knowledge of the evidences and obligations of religion and morality.

I grant that many men have rejected the prejudices derived from the Bible: but I believe no man ever did so without having been made *wiser* or *better* by the early operations of these prejudices upon his mind. Every just principle that is to be found in the writings of Voltaire, is borrowed from the Bible: and the morality of the deists, which has been so much admired and praised, is, I believe, in most cases, the effect of habits, produced by early instruction in the principles of christianity.

(To be continued.)

CRITICISM.

POSTHUMOUS MEMOIRS OF MARMONTEL.

(Continued from page 167.)

The first name in French literature, during the period to which these memoirs extend, was unquestionably that of Voltaire; and they contain a considerable number of anecdotes relating to him. The impression, upon the whole, is favourable; and it may be relied on the more safely, as it is given without enthusiasm or apparent partiality. He is represented as more friendly and indulgent than we had been led to imagine; full of vivacity and impatience, to a degree of childishness and folly; extremely changeable in his humour; vain, satirical, and ambitious of glory without modesty and without measure.

The observation he makes upon the encouragement he gave to all young men, who shewed any talent for poetry, is very just and acute: 'The French Parnassus was an empire, the sceptre of which he would have yielded to no one on earth; but for this very reason, he delighted to see its subjects multiply.' He behaved to Marmontel with uniform kindness; offered him money in his distresses; went with him to the first representation of his tragedies; and sympathized in all the anxiety and all the triumph of the author. From his earliest outset in life, he was ambitious of distinction and advancement at court; and bought the place of a gentleman of the bed-chamber, to put himself in the way of promotion. But the king was prejudiced against him; and the courtiers who were jealous of his talents, easily found means to foster his dislike. Voltaire's own impatient vanity, indeed, very effectually seconded their efforts, by leading him to do a number of rude and imprudent things, which royalty can never pardon in a person of inferior condition. We shall mention but one from the collection before us.

'He had written an opera for the court, called *Le Temple de la Gloire*. The third act, of which Trajan was the hero, presented a flattering allusion for the king; it was a hero, just, humane, generous, pacific, and worthy the love of the world, to whom the temple of glory was open. Voltaire doubted not but that the king would recognize himself in this eulogy. After the

play he met him in his way out, and seeing that the king passed without saying any thing to him, he took the liberty of asking him, *Is Trajan satisfied ?* Trajan, surprized and displeased, that he should have dared to interrogate him, passed on in cold silence ; and the whole court thought Voltaire very wrong for having dared to question the king.' 1. p. 388, 389.

We suppose there can be but one opinion upon that subject ; but this and other mortifications, which plainly shewed him that he was not destined to make his way at Versailles, determined him to accept the king of Prussia's invitation to Berlin. The obstacles which were thrown in the way of this journey, and the circumstances by which it was at last decided, are both equally characteristic.

' Voltaire wanted a thousand pounds to defray his expences : and Frederick, after some hesitation, agreed to let him have that sum. But Madame Dennis wanted to accompany her uncle, and for this additional expence Voltaire asked for another thousand pounds. This was what the king of Prussia would not listen to. " I shall be very happy," said he in his answer, " that Madame Dennis accompanies you ; but I do not ask it."..." Look," said Voltaire to me, " at this meanness in a king. He has barrels of gold,and he won't give a thousand poor pounds for the pleasure of seeing Madame Dennis at Berlin ! He shall give them, or I myself will not go." A comical incident came and finished this dispute. One morning, as I was going to see him, I found his friend Thiriot in the garden of the Palais-Royal, and as I was always on the watch for literary news, I asked him if he had heard any. " Yes," said he, " there is most curious news : you are going to M. de Voltaire's, and there you shall hear it ; for I am going there as soon as I shall have taken my coffee."

' Voltaire was writing in his bed when I went in ; in his turn he asked me " What's the news ?"..." I know none," said I, " but Thiriot, whom I have met in the Palais-Royal, says he has something very interesting to tell you. He is coming."

" Well, Thiriot," said he, " you have some curious news to tell me ?"..." Oh ! very curious, and that will please you particularly," answered Thiriot, with his sardonic laugh, and the nasal twang of a capauchin...." Let's hear what you have to tell ?"..." I have to tell you that Arnaud-Baculard is arrived at Potsdam, and that the king of Prussia has received him with open arms."..." With open arms !"..." That Arnaud has presented him an epistle,"..." Very bombastical and very insipid !" —" not at all,very fine, so fine that the king of Prussia has answered it by another epistle."..." The king of Prussia, an epistle to Arnaud ! No,no, Thiriot ; they have been making a joke of you." —" I don't know what you call a joke, bnt I have the two epistles in my pocket."..." Let's see,...quick, let me read these masterpieces of poetry. What insipidity ! what meanness ! how egregiously stupid !" said he, in reading the epistle of Arnaud : then passing to that of the king, he read a moment in

silence and with an air of pity. But when he came to these verses—

" Voltaire's a setting sun;
But you are in your dawn;"

'He started up, and jumped from his bed, bounding with rage: "Voltaire a setting sun, and Baculard in his dawn! and it is a king who writes this enormous folly! let him think only of reigning."

'It was with difficulty that Thiriot and I could prevent ourselves from bursting into laughter to see Voltaire in his shirt, dancing with passion, and addressing himself to the king of Prussia. "I'll go," said he, "yes, I'll go teach him to know men;" and from that moment his journey was decided. I have suspected that the king of Prussia intentionally gave him this spur; and without that, I doubt whether he would have gone, so angry was he at the refusal of the thousand pounds, not all out of avarice, but out of indignation at not having obtained what he asked.' I. p. 397....401. *(To be continued.)*

BIOGRAPHY.

THE RIGHT HON. CHARLES JAMES FOX.

" Illum non populi fasces non purpura re gum
Flexit.——————————"

(Continued from page 137.)

In the course of the succeeding year, Mr. Gray, now lord Howick, experienced the powerful support of the member for Westminster in his motion for a parliamentary reform, while Mr. Wilberforce, who had regularly opposed him, instantly received his aid in all the measures proposed for the abolition of the slave trade.

At length, after enjoying, and in some measure, revelling in power during eighteen long years, Mr. Pitt voluntarily retired from office, and Mr. Addington, since created Viscount Sidmouth, concluded the treaty of Amiens, on which occasion he received the support of Mr. Fox and all his friends. The latter may be said to have now experienced that species of triumph which arises out of political anticipation, for as the terms were not so good as might have been obtained in 1796, it was obvious that all the miseries, calamities, blood and treasure, wasted to no manner of purpose during the preceding six years, would have been avoided had his warning voice been but listened to.

When a renewal of the contest was meditated, Mr. Fox expressed himself avowedly hostile to that measure: "I do not contend (said he) that the continuance of peace is infinitely desirable. I feel its importance in the strongest manner, and I am not ashamed to avow an opinion for which I have not unfre-

quently been exposed to ridicule. I now again explicitly declare, that I consider the preservation of national honour to be the only legitimate cause of war.

"This doctrine I hold (continues he) on the plain principle that honour is inseparably connected with self-defence. If it can be proved to me that the national honour has been insulted, or the national dignity disgraced, I will, without hesitation, declare my opinion, which is, that it would be a fair legitimate cause for recommencing hostilities. I must, however, hear a very strong case made out before I can give my vote for replunging the country in those disasters which a calamitous contest had produced, and from which we have been so recently delivered."*

It was in strict consistency with this notion, that, when the royal message was brought down declaratory of hostilities, Mr. Fox expressed his opinion at large, both against the war as unnecessary, and against the crisis at which it took place, as eminently impolitic. This problematical measure soon proved fatal to Mr. Addington's administration, and the reins of government having dropped from his hand, were immediately siezed by Mr. Pitt.

It was now imagined by some, that the critical state of public affairs, and the common safety of the empire, would have produced a coalition between the new minister and his ancient adversary; but while the former expressed his own readiness to comply, he, at the same time hinted that insurmountable obstacles had occurred *in a certain quarter*. Having thus attached to his own person the sole responsibility, the war was immediately extended to Spain, which had hitherto been permitted to enjoy all the benefits of neutrality. This measure, which was termed *energetic* by his admirers, was loudly censured by Mr. Fox, as fraught with "a characteristic duplicity;" and he maintained, at the same time, that "ministers had acted both rashly and unjustly in their conduct."

Meanwhile an union had been effected by the Foxite and Grenville parties, and from that moment the return of both to power was considered as certain. This was in part evinced by the conduct of the house of commons, in respect to the prosecution of Lord Melville; and although the petition of the Irish Catholics was thrown out by a great majority, yet a large portion of the empire was, in some measure, conciliated on this occasion, by the consideration that it was not destitute of powerful protection.

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* The following political maxim inculcated by an old writer, is somewhat similar, and proves the coincidence between great minds, viz:—

"That kingdoms are preserved by reputation, which is as well their strongest support in peace, as their chiefest safety in time of war; when once they grow despised, they are either subject to foreign invasion or domestic troubles.

In the midst of these discussions, Mr. Pitt, who had been for some time tottering, sickened and died. A vote of parliament, a public funeral, and the payment of his debts at the expence of the nation, added to his sudden fate and acknowledged talents all tended to render his memory respected; but what contributed more than any thing else to shield it from reproach, was the junction of his friends and relations with his enemies and opponents; so that the latter could not have assailed his character without violating all the decencies of life with respect to the former.

After an opposition of twenty two years...a period unexampled, in point of duration, in the annals of this country...Mr. Fox, in 1806 resumed his situation as secretary of state for the foreign department, which he had surrendered in 1783...4. Soon after this event, the conduct of the king of Prussia excited general indignation. Not content with siezing on Hanover, he excluded the English commerce not only from his own dominions, but also from every port which he could either terrify or influence. On this the new minister published a spirited declaration, and, at the same time, adopted measures for blockading all the ports, and intercepting all the trade of the house of Bradenburg.

But his mind was never for a single instant diverted from what may be considered the grand object of his life. He had conceived an idea from the very beginning, that the war was ill-timed, and no sooner had he obtained the seals, than he determined if posssible, to put an honourable termination to it. As he had never made use of any intemperate language, or displayed any personal antipathies, the enemy of course could have no objection to such a mediator; but just at the critical period, when it was supposed the most of that difficulties had been removed, the man on whose fate, the peace of the world, in no small degree depended, was snatched away from his friends and the world by a confirmed dropsy.

(To be continued.)

AN ANNIVERSARY ORATION.

(Continued from p. 168.)

At first view, there appears to be, in this particular instance, a striking inconsistency between the doctrines and the practicable establishments of the age. But, on a more careful examination of the subject, this seeming inconsistency vanishes. It must be recollected that in the fifteenth century, the fervid enthusiasm, which had previously impelled the hosts of Europe to carry their arms into Asia in the holy wars, had not yet entirely subsided in the breasts of their descendants. The countries of the East continued still to be regarded with mingled emotions of reverence and abhorrence—reverence for the soil which

had been rendered sacred by the footsteps and blood of the Messiah, and abhorrence of the idolatrous and impious rites by which that soil was polluted. The infidels by whom these abominations were committed, not only throughout the country where the gospel of life had been first promulgated, but even on the hill of Calvary itself were considered as the proper and peculiar objects of divine indignation. On these heretics therefore, it was believed that the Deity had, by his own immediate act, sent down the destroying *pestilence*, as a punishment for their disbelief of the gospel, and their disregard for the precepts, of his Son.—Like the late pestilential diseases of the United States, the Asiatic pestilence was *then* erroneously regarded as a *new* disease.—But, as it was deemed both new and of supernatural origin, it was considered as also possessed of certain extraordinary properties. Among these was, *its power of being communicated from one country to another*. Although this disease had been, in reality, known from the earliest times, yet, previously to this period, no such power had ever been attributed to it. The fleets and armies of the ancient Greeks and Romans had repeatedly visited Egypt and the other provinces of the east, and returned again to their native countries, without the least restraint or precaution So had the troops of the various European nations, during the continuance of the holy wars. Yet, in these instances, no suspicion appears to have been entertained of the introduction of the Asiatic pestilence into any part of Europe. But we know that this disease raged several times among the crusades whilst in Asia, as well as in many of the armies of ancient Rome.

Such, then, appears to have been the origin of the doctrine of the importation of pestilence into Christendom. A malignant and fatal disease was believed to have been inflicted, as a punishment from Heaven, on the infidels of the East. This disease was further believed to be communicated by contagion, through the channels of commerce, to the christians of the West. And, for the prevention of such a calamity among the latter, systems of quarantine were devised and erected.

But, there was probably another cause which assisted in inducing the inhabitants of Europe, to consider the pestilence as introduced among them from the shores of Asia. This cause also had an indirect relation to the holy wars. The crusaders, on their return from the East, though they were never charged with the introduction of pestilence, are known to have brought along with them the small-pox, as one of the rewards of their pious expeditions. This circumstance would be likely to induce their descendants, who suffered grievously from that loathsome and destructive complaint, to regard the land polluted by the infidels, as the proper nursery of many other formidable diseases....Having certainly derived one of their calamities from that region, it was not unnatural for them, in their prejudiced and very limited view of things, to look to the same quarter for other evils of a similar nature. Even at the present day, there are certain

strange and irrational notions entertained on this subject. The countries of Asia are still considered by many as the birth-place of particular diseases which cannot originate in Europe or America, although the climates of these several regions are, in many places, precisely similar, and all their other physical causes are capable of operating with the same degree of force. Such sentiments like the dreams of the physicians of the fifteenth century, are at open war with the very rudiments of philosophy.

There is still a further circumstance, which also contributes to give a very superstitious complexion to the origin of quarantines. The term itself imports, that *forty days* constituted the period of time, deemed necessary to be set apart for the purification of things infected. But the adoption of this period cannot be considered as the result of a philosophical inquiry, relative to the nature of pestilential poison, and the space of time requisite for its removal or destruction. It is derived merely from a superstitious regard for the number *forty*, on account of the accidential relation which that number bears to certain events and circumstances recorded in the Old and New Testaments. Thus, the Israelites were *forty* years in traversing the wilderness between Egypt and the Land of Promise. Under the law of Moses, the term of *forty* days was necessary for the completion of certain purifactory processes. Christ fasted *forty* days in the wilderness, for the purpose, as some commentators alledge, of purifying his body from all such passions and propensities, as might tend to render it disobedient to the dictates of the spirit. Therefore, said the priests, and other superstitious zealots of the day, *a quarantine*, or lustration of forty days, is requisite for the cleansing of vessels, and other articles, contaminated by pestilential contagion.

Such, then were the time when, and the circumstances under which, lazarettoes and systems of quarantine were first established by the nations of Europe. The age was a period of great darkness, and the whole business appears to have originated in, and to have been deeply tinctured by, the religious bigotry and delusion of the times. As a further evidence of this delusive bigotry, it may be observed that lazarettoes and pest-houses were, at first, entrusted almost exclusively to the care of ecclesiastics, whose piety and sacred character were supposed to be a shield against the arrows of contagion. Nor have the rules, regulations, and general management of these institutions undergone any very material amendment or alteration, even down to the present day. In the south of Europe lazarettoes and quarantine establishments are in nearly the same condition, and under nearly the same government now, that they were three hundred years ago. The light which, like a day-star, has burst forth in all departments of physical science, does not appear to have penetrated, as yet, the ancient night of these establishments. They are, in almost as high a degree, overwhelmed by prejudice, su-

perstition, and error, at present, as they were, at the time of their first institution. Yet have they served as the chief models for similar establishments in most other parts of Europe. Hence, when the celebrated Howard set out on his travels to acquire a knowledge of quarantines for the benefit of his country, he directed his course to the shores of the Mediterranean. Yet, from the account which that writer has himself given of the several pest-houses and lazarettoes, which he visited in Italy and elsewhere, they appear to the eye of philosophy, much better calculated to generate than to prevent pestilential diseases. For they are mere dungeons of dampness, filth, and putrefaction. The ceremonies through which all persons and articles arriving at them from sickly or suspected places are obliged to pass, are as unmeaning and preposterous as any of the rights of the most superstitious form of worship. Indeed such is the perverted state of these establishments that (supposing their continuance to be necessary at all) it calls for the reforming hand of a medical Luther, or a Calvin, no less than the abuses of the church did during the pontificate of Leo X. If circumstances do not even demand an entire demolition of them (which I am persuaded they do) they demand, at least, their complete regeneration.

[*To be continued.*]

For the Observer.

THE SALAMANDER.

As the salamander, more than almost any other animal, has been the subject of popular error, and as the account of it is not a long one, we shall extract it, from a work of much merit, for the information of our readers.

"The salamander, so long the subject of popular error, and of which so many idle tales have been recited by the more ancient naturalists, is an inhabitant of many parts of Germany, Italy, France, &c. but does not appear to have been discovered in England. It delights in moist and shady places, woods, &c. and is chiefly seen during a rainy season. In the winter it lies concealed in the hollows about the roots of old trees, in subterraneous recesses, or in the cavities of old walls, &c. The salamander is easily distinguished by its colours, being of a deep shining black, variegated with large, oblong, or rather irregular patches of bright orange-yellow, which, on each side of the back, are commonly so disposed as to form a pair of interrupted longitudinal stripes: the sides are marked by many large, transverse wrinkles, the intermediate spaces rising into strongly marked convexities; and the sides of the tail often exhibit a similiar appearance; on each side the back of the head are situated a pair of large tubercles, which are in reality parotid glands, and are thus protuberant not only in some others of the lizard tribe, but in a remarkable manner in the genus rana: these parts, as well as the

back and sides of the body, are beset in the salamander with several large, open pores or foramina, through which exudes a peculiar fluid, serving to lubricate the skin, and which, on any irritation, is secreted in a more sudden and copious manner, under the form of a whitish gluten, of a slightly acrimonious nature; and from the readiness with which the animal, when disturbed, appears to evacuate it, and that even occasionally to some distance, has arisen the long-continued popular error of the salamander's being enabled to live uninjured in the fire, which it has been supposed capable of extinguishing by its natural coldness and moisture: the real fact is, that, like any of the cold and glutinous animals, as snails, &c. it, of course, is not quite and instantaneously destroyed by the force of fire as an animal of a drier nature would be. The general length of the salamander is about seven or eight inches, though it sometimes arrives at a much larger size: in the number and form of its spots it varies considerably, and is occasionally seen entirely black; the tail is somewhat shorter than the body, and of a round or cylindric form, gradually tapering to the extremity, which is rather obtuse than sharp. Like other lizards of this tribe, the salamander lives principally on insects, small snails, &c. its tongue, however is not so formed as to catch these in a sudden manner, being short, broad, and in some degree confined, so as not to be darted out with celerity. It is capable of living in water as well as on land, and is sometimes found in stagnant pools, &c. Its general pace is slow, and its manners torpid.

"A strange error appears to have prevailed relative to the supposed poisonous nature of this animal, and the malignity of its venom has even been described as scarcely admitting a remedy. On this subject the writings of Gesner and Aldrovandus afford ample information; but it is useless, as well as unpleasing, in these days of general illumination, to detail the absurd and erroneous doctrines of past ages. It may be sufficient to observe, that the salamander is perfectly innoxious, and incapable of inflicting either wound or poison on any of the larger animals, though it appears from the experience of Laurenti, that the common small grey lizard (L agil. var.) is poisoned by biting a salamander, and thus swallowing the secreted fluid of the skin; becoming almost immediately convulsed, and dying in a very short time afterwards.

"The salamander is a viviparous species, producing its young perfectly formed, having been first hatched from internal eggs, as in the viper, and some other amphibia. It is said to retire to water, in order to deposit its young, which, at their first exclusion, are furnished with ramified bronchial fins, or processes on each side of the neck, and which being merely temporary organs, are afterwards obliterated, as in the young of frogs and water-newts. The number of young produced at one birth, by the salamander, is said sometimes to amount to thirty or forty."

[The following charming SONNETS, are melodious and elegant translations from Petrarch by Edward Coxe, Esq.]

" Alone and pensive through deserted vales,
Onward I roam, with wandering feet, and slow,
Where in the trackless wilds soft breathing gales
Soothe, while they pity my desponding woe.
To shun the curious world's enquiring eye,
Remote from human footsteps I retire,
That world ! which in my looks would soon descry,
I waste within from slow consuming fire.

Yet from the gaze of man while thus conceal'd
These sighs my hopeless passions have reveal'd
To every hill and mountain, stream and grove ;
And though I court the most sequester'd glade,
Or rush into the forest's thickest shade,
I cannot fly the swift pursuit of love !"

" Thou vale ! whose echoes answer to my woes ;
Thou river—whose clear stream my sorrows swell ;
Ye birds—who sing ; ye beasts who here repose ;
Ye finny tribes—between these banks that dwell ;

Fann'd by my sighs ye balmy gales serene—
Thou path—so smiling once, but now forlorn ;
Thou cheerful hill—of anguish now the scene,
Where I on loves accustom'd wings am borne.

Ye are the same—your gales, as soft an air ;
Fragrance and strains as sweet each grove supplies ;
But I am chang'd—and haunted by despair—
Yet still I view the spot with ling'ring eyes,
Whence Laura reach'd the mansions of the just,
Leaving her beauteous form to mix with dust."

VARIETY.

For the Observer.

HISTORICAL EPHEMERIS.

21*st of March*, 324 years before Jesus Christ, *Alexander the Great*, died at Babylon, either by poison or from an excess of wine, at the age of 32.

21*st of March* 1140...there was an eclipse of the sun, which occasioned a total darkness in England.

21*st of March* 1556...Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, was burnt alive at Oxford under the reign of Queen Mary.

21*st of March* 1787...the expedition for forming the establishment of Botany Bay, (in new Holland) set out from England.

21*st March* 1792...the famous decree of the constitutional assembly, for the sequestration of the property of the emigrants, to be appropriated to the uses of the nation.

21*st of March* 1796...the Abbè Raynal, author of the philosophic, (or rather romantic) history of the East and West Indies, died at Paris. He was 84 years old, and was one of the vainest men of Europe.

The following quotation from the preface of a book, entitled, "A Treatise on the Nightingale," shews, in a clear light, the importauce attached by every person to his own employments. "I have," says the author, "employed twenty years in composing this work. Men of reflection have always maintained, that the greatest and most refined pleasure we are capable of tasting in this world, is that which results from our being sensible that we are of some use to society; this utility we ought to have in view in all our actions; and he who does not thus employ himself in doing all he can to promote the general good of mankind, seems to be ignorant that he is born as much for the advantage of others as his own. Such are the motives which have induced me to present to the public this Treatise on the Nightingale." Some lines after, the author adds: "That love of the public welfare which has induced me to publish this work has not suffered me to forget that it ought to be written with frankness and sincerity."

ERRATA.

No. 11—page 170, 4th note for '*Mendou*,' read *Meudon*.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

FOR THE OBSERVER.

On the appearance of the American forest in Autumn.

When Ceres' and Pomona's plenteous stores,
Have well repaid the happy farmer's toil;
Then let me haste, "the varying God," to view,
'Mong groves and forests; where in richest dyes,
The robe autumnal, o'er the woods he throws.
Daughter of thought, mild Contemplation! Thou,
With Heav'n-born Piety, my steps attend!
And, as the rapturous prospect strikes the eye,
Let wonder, love and praise, in union join,
To celebrate, the hand that drew it forth.
The genial season past, the sylvan bands
Prepare to quit their nuptial habiliments;
Yet, e'er their naked branches are expos'd
To the chill northern blast, a greater grace
The vegetative mass pervades. And now
Each tree and shrub, of (1) Pan's extensive realm,
Join emulous, to vie in tint and shade,
With Flora's fairest favourites; and far
Around, the varied landscape glows, with all
The dazzling splendor of the bow of Heaven.
In various families, promiscuous plac'd,
The tender objects of the Dryad's care,
By a peculiar dress their sires proclaim.
And first, the (2) Laurus tribe, by Nature arm'd

With resinous secretions, to repel
The blighting touch of frost corrosive, wear
Their emerald honors, through the winter's snow.
Not so, the hoary leaves of (3) Acer's brow;
His five lobed, fragile ornaments, seem blanch'd
With pale anticipation of their end.
Acer! the generous friend of thankless Man,
Who sweetens oft their cup, with his best blood,
Regardless of the wounds through which it flows.
Next, cloth'd in gold, the fruitful (4) Juglans stands,
And his nutricious crop, in dusky showers
Descending, strews around a rich repast.
Beneath his lofty boughs, the humble (5) Rhus
Rears rubied pyramids, with pride to blend
With his own vest, of brightest Tysiac die.
The (6) Platanus, with wide extended arms,
Rugged and bleach'd, while waving in the wind
The pendent, globase freight of every limb,
The great memorial stands of cent'ries past,
And, seems to mock the fell destroyer's scythe.
Here (7) Nyssa with his deep carnation robe,
And (8) Cornus, deck'd with many a roseate wreath,
In the gay scene, their place conspicuous hold.
But of the happy, gaudy group to name
Each individual—would fatigue the Muse.
Anon, a messenger, on downy wing,
Forth from the cave of Æolus, is sent
To gather tribute for maternal earth.
The grateful boughs, with trembling haste shake off
Part of their store of amythist, topaz,
The glowing carbuncle and emerald gay:
The shower promiscuous, glistens afar;
Now, wantons on the bosom of the breeze,
And now, in circles quivering, fluttering, falls
To deck with gems, the bed that gave them birth.
"These, are thy glorious works, parent of good!
Almighty!" Thee we recognise, when first
Thy genial sun bursts into birth the bud;
When thou the fragrant flowers unfold, and when
At thy command, the vegetable world,
In vivifying sleep, the winters pass.

PHILO-NATURA.

NOTES.

(1) 'PAN,' is the heathen deity, presiding overshepherds and forests.
(2) 'LAURUS TRIBE,' evergreens, such as laurel, spice wood, &c.
(3) 'ACER,' seccharinum, the sugar maple.
(4) 'JUGLANS,' walnut, hickory, &c.
(5) 'RHUS' sumach, whose leaves are purple in the fall.
(6) 'PLATANUS,' accidentalis.....button wood.
(7) 'NYSSA,' integrifolia.....the gum tree,
(8) 'CORNUS,' florida.....dog wood.

SELECTED.

LINES BY THOMAS ROMNEY ROBINSON.

.....

WRITTEN IN HIS NINTH YEAR.

.....

ON MY FATHER's BIRTH DAY.

The fleeting year revolving round,
Again brings back thy natal day;
Let Mirth and Joy be ever found,
And health renew her roseate sway.

While sickness and her direful train,
With hasty steps, have ta'en their flight;
And Arts and Sciences again
Shall cheer the hours with gay delight.

With jocund mien, midst Sorrows gloom,
Those charm despondency away;
And these th' enveloped mind illume
With heavenly wisdom's sacred ray.

Thus may kind Heaven thy years increase,
And gently smooth that rugged road,
Whose flowery end's eternal Peace,
Which leads to virtue's blest abode.

SONNET.

BY CAMOENS.

Silent and cool, now fresh'ning breezes blow,
Where groves of chesnut crown yon shadowy steep;
And all around the tears of evening weep
For closing day, whose vast orb, westering slow
Flings o'er th' embattled clouds a mellower glow,
While hum of folded herds, and murmuring deep,
And falling rills, such gentle cadence keep,
As e'en might sooth the weary heart of woe,
Yet what to me is eve, what evening airs,
Or falling rills, or ocean's murmuring sound,
While sad and comfortless I seek in vain
Her who in absence turns my joy to cares,
And as I cast my listless glances round,
Makes varied scenery but varied pain!

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